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ABSTRACT

The category of the social increasingly informs the way people think about rhetoric. The foregrounding of the social has a two-fold origin in an uneasy relationship between poststructuralism and sociolinguistics. Poststructuralism has provided a strong version of the hypothesis that language is determinative. Sociolinguistics has established that variations in language not merely reflect but actively express, and are constituted by, structured social differences. Together the poststructuralist and the sociolinguistic arguments renew an older emphasis on the social identified with Marxism. There are four dominant forms of an emerging social rhetoric produced by this three-fold set of origins: (1) ethnography; (2) sociology of science; (3) cultural studies; and (4) collaborative learning. While all these forms of social rhetoric move away from the limiting individualism of objectivist and expressionist rhetorics, the essential question that any critical reading will want to pose about these rhetorics is whether, despite the criticism of individualism they provide, the alternative possibility designated as community really comes into view. Collaborative learning and ethnography have contributed the least to filling the empty space of community, whereas sociolinguistics and mass-culture criticism best explain and describe the concept of community. What is really lacking within the academic community, however, is the will to engage with the social world. (Six notes and 43 references are appended.) (MS)

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THE SHAPE OF SOCIAL RHETORIC

Wayne Pounds

The category of the social increasingly informs our thinking about rhetoric. "Social" has been a keyword at 4C's since about 1985, and this year the Conference [redacted] caught up with itself sufficiently that the word appeared in its theme, "Language, Self, and Society," and provided part of the topic focus for roughly half the sessions. Patricia Bizell, commenting on this social turn, sees the discipline as "moving in concert with recent developments in philosophy, literary theory and the human sciences. In all of these disciplines, questions are being raised about any theory of language that claims to transcend social contexts" (1986 37-38).

Much of this foregrounding of the social has a two-fold origin in an uneasy relationship between poststructuralism and sociolinguistics, though one important part of it has older roots. Poststructuralism, highly theoretical, has provided a strong version of the hypothesis that language is determinative ([redacted]), and in the work of Foucault language becomes an instrument in a total system of control. Sociolinguistics, highly empirical though theory driven, has established that variations in language not merely reflect but actively express, and are constituted by, structured social differences. Together the poststructuralist and the sociolinguistic arguments renew an older emphasis on the social identified with Marxism, an identification that sometimes discomforts the rhetor herself who never intended anything radical. In what follows I want to examine the four dominant

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forms of an emerging social rhetoric, produced by this three-fold set of origins--forms which I categorize as ethnography, sociology of science, cultural studies, and collaborative learning.[1] But first a word about the sociolinguistic background of the first form of social rhetoric I will treat, ethnography.

Compositionists are much more aware of poststructuralism, since it bears what in English studies corresponds to the Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval, the cachet of literary theory, and the names of Barthes, Foucault, and others have been effectively canonized in our citation lists. We are less aware of the contributions of sociolinguistics, I think, and therefore I would like to mention the work of two sociolinguists who are powerful theoretical sources for a social rhetoric, Dell Hymes and M. A. K. Halliday.

Hymes' work can most easily be understood as a seminal attack on Chomsky's debilitating contrast between an idealized competence and a despised performance. Hymes argues that any realistic theory of language ability should go beyond grammatical competence, for

> within the social matrix in which it acquires a system of grammar a child acquires also a system of its use, regarding persons, places, purposes, other modes of communication, etc.--all the components of communicative events, together with attitudes and beliefs regarding them. There also develop patterns of the sequential use of language in conversation, address, standard routines, and the like. In such acquisition resides the child's sociolinguistic

competence (or, more broadly, communicative competence), its ability to participate in its society as not only a speaking, but also a communicating member.( )

Communicative performance presumes heterogeneity rather than homogeneity among language users and thus demands empirical study of differences. Empirical research along these lines--what Hymes called "the ethnographies of communication" (3) --has been powerful. I have in mind, especially, such studies as Shirely Brice Heath's of the social uses of literacy and Labov's in black English. Their accomplishment rests on the fertile assumption not merely that language should be studied in context but that the social context is a material reality (Brodkey 91-92).[2] Hymes supplies a basic criterion for judging work on discourse communities when he says, "Speech community is a necessary, primary concept in that, if taken seriously, it postulates the unit of description as a social, rather than linguistic, entity. One starts with a social group and considers the entire organization of linguistic means within it, rather than start with some one partial, named organization of linguistic means, called a 'language'" (Foundations, p. 47).

Similar to Hymes' work in its insistence on material social dimensions has been the functionalist model of M. A. K. Halliday--functionalist, that is, in that its theory of language proposes that the structures of language have developed in response to the communicative needs that language is called upon to serve. Halliday claims that "language ability is a product of social structure" (Halliday 1970 [Fowler p. 220n.4]). He argues that different varieties or registers within one language reflect

and embody variant social structures and views of reality. In his recent Language as Social Semiotic Halliday writes that "Variation in language is in a quite direct sense the expression of fundamental attributes of the social system; dialect variation expresses the diversity of social structures (social hierarchies of all kinds), while register variation expresses the diversity of social processes" (2-3). [redacted]

Hymes' notion of ethnographies of communication was developed by Gumperz and others and then applied to communities defined by written practices--a development which Faigley (1985) has discussed-- and the result has been the creation of what is currently the most active form of social rhetoric--that of ethnography. Ethnographical approaches fall into two subsets, depending on whether the subject is academic communities or non-academic. Studies of non-academic communities have been concerned with adult literacy, as in the work of social scientists such as Tannen, Heath, Scribner and Cole, and Bernstein, who situate literacy within the social contexts which determine its use. In this same category I include the ethnography of speech communities by sociolinguists like Labov, Bauman and Sherzer, and Hymes. Within an earlier and separate tradition the work of Vygostsky and Luria has also been influential. Both of these subgroups--the sociologists and the linguists--have in common the belief that the social reality of language has a material base, one that can be studied and understood, and this assumption helps account for the fecundity of the field.

The same level of accomplishment has yet to be reached by compositionists working in the area of non-academic discourse. George Dillon's recent Rhetoric as Social Imagination (1986), for example, applies modern theories of textuality to the U.S. subindustry of advice and self-help writing, showing how the text positions the reader and the writer, but the potential interest of this project is subverted by Dillon's textualization of the social level. Culture becomes a code but not one that is a code "for anything; language refers, but always to another piece of codified reality, to more language" (10). He thus falls victim to the schizophrenia which is an inherent danger in poststructuralism: the freeing of the signifier from its relation to an external referent, which vacuum is filled by other texts (Jameson, "Postmodernism," pp. 118-20).[3]

A more promising direction is represented by Odell and Goswami's collection of essays, which contains a section called "Viewing Writing from a Social/Institutional Perspective." The essays in this section, however, don't live up to the promise of the rubric, for they emphasize discourse at the expense of community, particularly its material dimensions and relations of power, which are ignored. Faigley's essay is the first and most insightful of these; arguing the need for a "social perspective," it clears a theoretical space on which the other essays build. Like the other writers in this section, however, Faigley centers on discourse, and when his attention shifts to community it is to ask how they are organized by texts and textual practices. His argument allows for the shaping of the community by the practice of individuals, but it overlooks the shaping of the individual by

the community, as well as the shaping of the community by conflict and relations of power. Though Faigley's 1986 essay directs our attention to "the social systems that stand in relation to [acts] of writing" ( ), his work has yet to provide [redacted] a model, of this act of attention.

Research into academic discourse communities is the largest [redacted] subset of ethnographical work, and within [redacted] certain groupings are so familiar as to require little comment on my part. In literary studies, for example, the work of Stanley Fish has received wide recognition from compositionists--more, I think, than it merits. Fish's ideas offer little to a social rhetoric, since his community is purely notional, and he reifies academic discourse into an all-embracing totality which precludes change and thus nullifies in advance the activity of rhetoric (Bizell 494-50).

A less known field within academic discourse is anthropology, the ethnographic study by anthropologists of anthropological discourse For the sake of convenience, I will focus on the recent anthology edited by James Clifford and George E. Marcus called Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography (1986), product of a 1984 seminar of scholars involved in what Clifford calls "textual criticism and cultural theory" (vii). By this phrase he does not mean the kind of work exemplified by Geertz, which is textual in the sense that it treats folk performance as a text. Indeed compositionists' fascination with Geertz shows the time lag in movement across disciplinary boundaries, for it takes place just at the moment

when Geertz's approach is being questioned by anthropologists. Geertz textualizes performance and muses on ethnographic texts, but his object remains the description of the anthropological Other, the native.

Clifford's natives, in contrast, are the writers of ethnographic texts, and his theme is "the textual construction of anthropological authority" (Rabinow 242-43). What is central to this movement is the new place of writing. "No longer a marginal, or occulted, dimension," the invisible medium of objective description, "writing has emerged as central to what anthropologists do both in the field and thereafter" (2). Clifford's characterization of the writers collected in his anthology reads like a prescription for a vital social rhetoric: "[These scholars] see culture as composed of seriously contested codes and representations; they assume that the poetic and the political are inseparable, that science is in, not above, historical and linguistic processes. They assume that academic and literary genres interpenetrate and that the writing of cultural descriptions is properly experimental and ethical. Their focus on text making and rhetoric serves to highlight the constructed, artificial nature of cultural accounts. It undermines overly transparent modes of authority, and it draws attention to the historical predicament of ethnography, the fact that it is always caught up in the invention, not the representation, of cultures" (2). It is instructive to view composition studies through this anthropological lense and to see ourselves as a constellation of disciplines whose object is the description and critique of culture as manifest in writing

practices. The work of radical theorists like Eagleton and Jameson-- as I shall argue later --calls us to such a conception of our discipline.

The last field within the study of academic discourse, that of science, or, as it has come to be called, the sociology of science deserves a catagory to itself, since it is the largest, the oldest, and of distinct origin. Excellent recent overviews by Meyers and Bazerman make it unnecessary for me to treat this group in any detail, so I will comment only on its origin and its value as a social rhetoric. About its origins I will say only that the sociology of science arises in the 1930's, with explorations by Robert Merton, and others concerned with the sociology of knowledge, into the relations between the institution of science and society. In the 1960's and 70's, the formative period for sociolinguistics, the sociology of science focused on the social structure of the scientific community itself, on matters such as scientific values, the rise of specialities, and the relation between cognitive and social structure (Bazerman 157; Meyers 597).

Meyers discusses the difference between research in the U.S. and in Britain, states that the former tends to split the social side of science from the technical, which is assumed to be fact, and the latter to be more doubtful of "the assumption that natural knowledge can be separated from the social processes that produce it" (596). Meyers notes that British sociologists are "more likely to see their work in political terms, while American sociologists seem likely to see their work as professional,

value-free, another form of objective knowledge" (597). This willingness on the part of the British to contextualize suggests their work may have a greater potential as a contribution to social rhetoric, but the works Meyers revewed in College English are not explicitly political, and he doesn't name any that are, leaving us tantalized but unfed. Much the same disappointment results from reading the essays on the literary character and the rhetoric of economics by McCloskey, whom Meyers doesn't discuss. The former essay, which argues that science, and economics in particular, is literary and that literature is scientific, is useful in breaking down the walls of academic specialization. The latter, focusing on tropes, argues the rhetorical constructedness of economic texts; but neither essay uses rhetoric to link the texts and the world, and the overall effect of both is a letteraturizzazione of science.

The third major form of social rhetoric I'd like to examine is collaborative learning, which can be seen, like the first two cataegories, as a concern with discourse communities, but in this case the concern grows from the bottom up. The intention is less to study existing discourse communities than to create them from the raw material of student lives. For decades now teachers have recognized that group-learning techniques hold tremendous promise for empowering the student and curbing the excesses of individualism in the classroom (Myers). The failure of collaborative work in the late 60's and early 70's to sustain itself can be attributed to its degeneration into feel-good therapy and its inability to form genuine communities. It failed to keep the world outside the classroom in focus, or, if it

looked outside, it failed to recognize the ideological construction of "the real world," and the result was the abstraction of the group from actual social conditions (Harold 201). These same problems continue to beset collaborative learning in the present, at least in traditional schools.[4]

Outside the schools, in the literacy compaigns of Paolo Freire and his associates, including the adult literacy work reported on recently by Holzman, collaborative learning has achieved remarkable successes. Within the schools, the difficulty of doing collaborative work is evident already in the opposing terms "collaboration" and "individualism," but this difficulty has not been squarely faced by collaborative learning's chief spokesman, Kenneth Bruffee. The difficulty, in simple terms, is that a primary function of the classroom is to replicate the class structure and competitive values of the larger society; whereas collaborative learning, to the extent that it succeeds in empowering the student, produces alternative structures and values. Both the theory of collaborative learning and its practice must come to terms with this contradiction or else be assimilated to the self-defeating yuppyism of education for upward mobility.

Though the theory of collaborative learning has yet to find a persuasive formulation, much in Bruffee's discussion bodes well for the viability of collaborative learning as a social rhetoric. Certainly his view of it as a restructuring of the extreme individualism and hierarchy of the classroom ("Collaborative Learning," p. 647) seems to recognize the source of conflict

within education, and his statement in another context that "the key issue is authority" (Short Course, p. 2) promises to foreground this conflict; but Bruffee's two College English essays retreat from the question of conflict and take refuge in explications of Rorty and, as Sledd has charged, in the consolations of professionalism. Bruffee's failure to provide a coherent theory of collaborative learning stems from the contradictions of his position, his attempt to take a "liberal," "middle-of-the-road" stance (Bruffee's own terms; "Bruffee Responds," p. 714) in the development of a pedagogy whose premises --at least as implied in its rearrangement of the physical space of the classroom --are radical. Sledd is thus on target, I think, in charging Bruffee with ignoring the world outside the university and refusing to recognize that the challenge to improve education cannot be separated from the challenge to improve society (585-86). Bruffee's 1986 essay certainly leaves itself open to Sledd's charge, for in it Bruffee offers two reasons for considering the social-constructionist thought on which he bases his theory of collaborative learning: one seems at first disinterested, "to improve our understanding and expertise as scholars and teachers"; but he openly calls the other "unabashed professional self-interest" (778). With this admission the seeming disinterestedness of the first is revealed as additional professional self-promotion, and Bruffee admits that the disinterested motive "dovetails with our professional self-interest" (778).

And yet, to be fair to Bruffee, he has called teaching "broadly speaking, a political act" ("Kenneth A. Bruffee

Responds", p. 77)[5] and stated unequivocally that "all of us are committed professionally to change by virtue of our commitment to teaching" ("Kenneth Bruffee Responds,", p. 714). The difficulty, he finds, is in the manner of bringing about change, and here his posing of the alternatives reveals the shifting sands on which his liberal house is built. The extreme positions Bruffee wants to avoid are the conservative position, like that of Fish, which abandons the notion of change and goes back to explicating Milton; and, at the other extreme, what he calls the "radical left-wing" and "neo-Marxist" persuasion that "only violence can make any impact on the way things are" (713, 715). I have no trouble with Bruffee's characterization of the conservative position--which detects the same defeatist odor that Bizell and others detect around Fish--but Bruffee's figure of a warlike Marxism is a strawman and can only be understood as part of that unthinking dismissal of marxism which debilitates liberal attempts to think about social questions and confuses social-constructionist practitioners in composition when they find themselves sounding--to their consternation--like marxists. Bruffee asserts that the danger to U.S. education is not from the subservience to authority which "collaboration" connotes for some of his critics, but from "the inherent authoritarianism of cognitive thought" (714), and here he appeals to fear by bringing up the Eastern bloc. The very identification of Marxism with cognitivism is a strange blindness in so accute a scholar, for Marxist categories are social and material, not ideal; they were social-constructionist long before the term was invented. And stranger yet is Bruffee's implied

comparison between the Marxist-Leninism of the Eastern bloc and marxism in the U.S., for the two are vastly different and the latter's only vital presence is in the field of cultural studies.

In contrast to the theory of collaborative learning, which has so far been unpersuasive, the practice of Paolo Freire's version of collaborative learning has been highly successful, and this must give us thought. Of course we don't commonly think of Bruffee and Freire's work together, but the only thing separating them is our own class prejudices, which cannot associate Freire's work among the poor with Bruffee's among the privileged. I believe that the two pedagogies are in principle one, since they have in common the use of collective energies to empower and liberate the student. But what accounts for Freire's success, like Shor's, is that people working in Freirean groups concentrate on the conditions of their everyday lives;[6] whereas in collaborative learning, at least as Bruffee theorizes it, the focus is on isolated academic tasks, and the conditions of everyday life go unexamined. (The exception to this generalization is his discussion of Michael Ignatieff's highly theoretical The Needs of Strangers ["Social Construction,", pp. 782-83].)

Pat Bizzell may be thinking of B. & F. together — I'm not sure (her 4C's presentation)

Holzman's recent article on adult literacy education, which examines applications of Freire's methods of collaborative learning, finds the key issues are authority and specialization:

> The history of international adult education teaches us that where educational institutions and traditions have been tested under the most extreme conditions, they have broken on the issues of specialization and outside authority. This

> implies that "the truth of education" is to be found in a rejection of specialization and outside authority, that an education which is holistic and democratic is not only desirable, it is the only education practical for the most oppressed. Upon reflection, one also asks why should anyone, anywhere, be given an education that is not holistic, not democratic. (188)

Holzman's conclusion illuminates both the promise and the self-contradiction of Bruffee's work. Bruffee is at once within and outside the truth of education. In recognizing that authority is the issue, he is within it; but in promoting social-constructionist thought as a new specialization, or a supplement to existing ones, he contradicts himself, for specialization is the very form that "outside authority" takes within education, providing the lines along which curricula, teaching assignments, promotion and tenure, and funding are all decided.

In contrast to Bruffee's reluctance to deal with the social category which alone can make sense of the idea of community, mass-culture critique, the final form of social rhetoric that I will discuss, squarely confronts the social. If my view of mass-culture critique as a form of social rhetoric requires justification, I find it in the argument advanced by Terry Eagleton in his book on Walter Benjamin, in a chapter titled "A Small History of Rhetoric." He argues that "a political criticism," or what I am calling a rhetoric based on a material conception of the social,

> is not the invention of Marxists. On the contrary, it is one

> of the oldest, most venerable forms of literary criticism we know. The most widespread early criticism on historical record was not, in our senses "aesthetic": it was a mode of what we would now call "discourse theory", devoted to analysing the material effects of particular uses of language in particular social conjunctures. . . . Its intention, quite consciously, was systematically to theorize the articulations of discourse and power, and to do so in the name of political practice . . . . The name of this form of criticism was rhetoric. (101)

Citing instances that range from classical Greece to eighteenth century England, he shows pre-Romantic rhetoric to have been "a supremely pragmatic discourse" whose functions were "to litigate, prosecute, [and] politically persuade" (100-01). Eagleton's short history of rhetoric expands the historical rationale for the conclusion to his popular Literary Theory, where again he champions rhetoric as "the received form of critical analysis all the way from ancient society to the eighteenth century.

> Rhetoric in its major phase was neither a "humanism", concerned in some intuitive way with people's experience of language, nor a "formalism", preoccupied simply with analysing linguistic devices. . . . It saw speaking and writing not merely as textual objects, to be aesthetically contemplated or endlessly deconstructed, but as forms of activity inseparable from the wider social relations between writers and readers, orators and audiences, and as largely unintelligible outside the social purposes and conditions in which they were embedded. (206).

Eagleton's description of a critical rhetoric concerned with the whole range of cultural practices evokes the best work now being done in the field of mass-culture criticism. For the sake of convenience I will center my discussion on the massive collection of superb essays recently edited by Donald Lazere and called American Media and Mass Culture: Left Perspectives (1987).

Lazere traces the origins of the critical tradition of mass-culture studies back to the Frankfort School, which by the 1930's had come to see mass culture as the key agent of ideological hegemony, surpassing the church and challenging the state as the most influential socializing force. Similar critiques of mass society were made through the forties and fifties by writers like Orwell, Huxley, Mills, and Fromm, as well as by the "New York intellectuals" associated with Partisan Review, and other dissenting journals, only to be followed by a near total abeyance during the cold war. The 1960's brought a revival of mass-culture criticism that has proved permanent, and Mass-culture critics working in the seventies found a forum in a special issue of College English called "Mass Culture, Political Consciousness, and English Studies" (which Lazere edited). Lazere's current collection demonstrates that in the eighties mass-culture criticism has grown into a gutsy, practical yet well theorized movement. [should I discuss Jameson's 60's anthology?]

During this same period it has also firmly entrenched itself in the academies, but the dominant form of this establishment has been the non-critical, celebratory style exemplified by the Popular Culture Association. (At the one national meeting that I

attended, the keynote speaker was a representative of the Coca-Cola Corporation.) Lazere, nothing if not fair-minded, states that the affirmative stance of the poopular culture approach has provided a legitimate corrective to the unrelieved negativity of such elitists as the Leavises, Dwight Macdonald, T. S. Eliot, and the Frankfurt School. But without a critical apparatus and a foundation in social cateagories, popular culture studies for the most part float unanchored in the great inane and show little more understanding of the meaning of the cultural phenomena they describe than a pair of boys in the playground swapping baseball cards.

Unlike the Frankfort School, mass-culture criticism since the sixties treats its subject neither with negativity nor disdain. Recent criticism has retained its grounding in social categories and the critical apparatus these support while absorbing structuralism, semiology, deconstruction, and the structuralist Marxism of Althusser. The result has been a shift of focus manifest in a new awareness of what Frederic Jameson sees as the utopian moment of mass-culture ("Reification," p. 144). Critics no longer take a monolithic view of hegemony but rather see it as a "body of practices and expectations," "a lived system of meanings and values" (Williams 110) which includes contradictions and areas of struggle which permit the development of resistance and alternative values and practices. The critics collected in Lazere's anthology see mass culture as one part of this contested terrain. They acknowledge progressive political views within mass media; they discuss cases in which the media unintentionally generate oppositional forces; and they cite

instances of local expressions of working class culture and counter-hegemonic practices. Some also look to the progressive potentialities in new communications technology (Lazere 12). Above all, they show mass-culture criticism to be a form of discourse theory, devoted (in Eagleton's words) "to analysing the material effects of particular uses of language in particular social conjunctures . . . . Its intention, quite consciously, [is] systematically to theorize the articulations of discourse and power, and to do so in the name of political practice" (101). As such mass-culture critique constitutes a vital and exemplary form of social rhetoric, one which sees language as a function of society.

In conclusion, I would like to use these last two terms, language and society, for an assessment of our emerging social rhetoric, but for "society" I want to substitute the narrower and problematic term "community." While all the forms of social rhetoric described here move us away from the limiting individualism of objectivist and expressionist rhetorics, and so are all worth our attention, the essential question that any critical reading will want to pose about these rhetorics is whether, despite the criticism of individualism they provide, the alternative possibility designated as community really comes into view. In posing this question, I am following Frederic Jameson's recent critique of the bestselling Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life by Robert Bellah and his colleagues. This work is pertinent here, for it constitutes a sophisticated example of discourse analysis by a

team of social scientists who provide a powerful critique of individualism. But the concept of community in this work-- for which the term "commitment" substitutes in the title --remains, as Jameson notes, "the name of an absent yet powerful, empty conceptual space" (546). The concept of community within social rhetoric is a similar empty space, one which only two of the four forms of social rhetoric I have described today begins to fill: [redacted] sociolinguistics as defined by the practice of Halliday and Hymes and others, and mass-culture critique as defined by the writers in Lazere's anthology. Hymes' and Halliday's work satisfies the criterion because of its empirical focus on existing communities; the mass-culture critics satisfy it by their concern with the social functions of language use and the social significance of every facet of contemporary culture.

The two forms of social rhetoric which have contributed least to filling the empty space of community are collaboratiave learning and ethnography, and their failure is important for it reflects directly upon ourselves as rhetoricians and intellectuals. Collaborative learning has been most disappointing because of its great promise in providing the tools to build community in the classroom, an emphasis on community which in the current fragmented landscapes of "lifestyle enclaves" seems almost a return of the repressed. But the proper understanding here should not be in terms of theory alone but of praxis, the dialectic combination of reflection and action. What distinguishes community, in the vital sense in which I am using it here, from the ephemeral groupings of collaborative learning, is purpose--purpose, which means the intent to change, which in

turn presupposes history, as a way of situating ourselves in the present, and conflict, as a way of understanding change. These last two terms are crucial vacuums within the practice of collaborative learning as Bruffee has given it to us, and within its theory as it derives especially from Rorty, in whose work history and conflict are conspicuous absences (Lentricchia 16).

The ethnography of discourse communities has made distinct contributions but for the most part only in the area of nonacademic discourse, where scholars have focused on the social uses of literacy as determined by particular social groupings and processes. Within the study of academic discourse communities, only Patricia Bizell's work has had the courage to pursue the full implications of socially grounded theory. A recent work by Linda Brodkey, Academic Writing as Social Practice, which cites Hymes as its sociolinguistic basis, also has forceful things to say. Apart from the accomplishments of these two scholars, the failure of academic-discourse studies to go beyond linguistic categories is symptomatic and crucial for what it tells us about ourselves. But in order to adequately state what it tells us, I would like to bring to bear the second perspective, that of language.

The limitations of current forms of social rhetoric may be seen as limitations of language. Again it is useful to compare Habits of the Heart, for Bellah and his colleagues "treat individualism, not as a form of consciousness, or as an idea, but rather as a particular kind of language or . . . discourse" (Jameson, p. 555; Bellah 20). The first language of Bellah's subjects,

members of the white middleclass, is individualism, a language whose current fashionable dress is the therapeutic, and their second is the residue of the older moral language of religious and eighteen-century republican values. Similarly in the case of social rhetoric--and this applies to academic writing generally--we can also distinguish two languages: first is that of individualism, whose dominant styles in rhetoric are the expressive and the cognitive. Individualism is also the language of collaborative learning, and as the dominant language--the lingua franca--of academe it necessarily pervades all current forms of social rhetoric. The second language may be broadly termed that of poststructuralism, whose extreme popularity has resulted in lexical borrowing in all dialects of individualism; and it has provided a a true second language for ethnography and mass-culture critique, with the result that most of the practitioners of these rhetorics are bilingual.

But what is lacking, not merely in academic discourse but in all discursive practices in this country, is a third language capable of struggling for legitimacy against the language of individualism. The subjects of Bellah et al. lack a language founded on social categories; as the authors write, "the extent to which many Americans can understand the workings of our economic and social organizations is limited by the capacity of their chief moral language to make sense of human interaction " (204). In academe, however, this language is not so much missing as it is submerged, if not actually silenced. To be sure, socialist scholars are not entirely absent from the university, as Lazere notes, but prejudice against them "is still so strong

in many schools and departments that in them socialism remains the ideology that dare not speak its name" (16). Indeed, one purpose of Lazere's anthology is "to reintroduce the discussion of socialism into American political, cultural, and academic discourse" (19).

The notion of a third language is precisely the challenge that Kenneth Burke presented to the first American Writers' Congress in 1935, challenging his Marxist audience to stop making things easy for themselves by talking esoteric jargon to the converted and "to enter into dialogue with the uncommitted, the skeptical, even the hostile" (Lentricchia 26). Lentricchia, from whom I take this anecdote, agrees with Burke about the intellectual's task, arguing that concerned intellectuals, insofar as they are going to have a chance of disseminating social ideas, will have to move inward into examination of the rhetorical grounds of such dissemination and "simultaneously outward into critical scrutiny of the rhetorical structure of the dominant hegemony" (26). Lentricchia's expansion of Burke suggests a two-fold challenge for social rhetoric in the U.S. On the one hand a challenge of language: to analyze the means whereby the New Right has successfully co-opted the language of populism for its own authoritarian ends. A model of this kind of discourse analysis is provided by Stuart Hall and his associates in England, who have analyzed the triumph of Thatcherism in terms of its politics of language, its rearticulation of popular morality around the themes of law and order, education, and economic crisis. [no citation: Hall 1981, 1985] But the

challenge is not only one of language; it is a social challenge: the challenge to contest the hegemony of the New Right's rhetorical practice by re-articulating its popular themes in democratic terms.

But I would be violating my own criterion if I were to end my discussion with the category of language. There is, after all, no real lack of alternative discourses within the academy; what is lacking is the will to engage with the social world --a world which is not outside the university but both inside and out. As Patricia Bizell writes, "political activity that changes the nature of the discourse and the institutions where by the discourse is preserved and promulgated will do more for social justice in educational opportunity . . . than simply allowing alternative orders . . . to speak in isolated classrooms. She finds the greatest obstacle to her recommendation in the "anti-intellectualism of the American academic," by which she means "our reluctance to emerge from our respective disciplines, to act as intellectuals in the larger community of the whole university and the whole society" (54). Like Bizell, Jameson sees the lack in the academic landscape as related to the matter of agency in social change. He argues that "the form agency takes for us . . . is that of intellectuals"--a word whose old-fashioned sound amid the carpeted silence of privileged enclaves symbolizes if not the near disappearance at least "the 'therapeutic' oblivion of the people to whom that designation used to apply" (Jameson, p. 564).

Notes

[1] In forming this taxonomy, I have profited from those by Berlin and Faigley.

[2] British and Continental sociolinguists building on this anti-structuralist, materialist basis include Pecheux, Fowler, and Kress and Hodge.

[3] Harris, who divides current critical practice into "revisionist" and "ecological" camps, places Dillon's earlier discourse analysis on the ecological side of his dichotemy, but Rhetoric as Social Imagination, it seems to me, belongs clearly on the revisionist side.

[4] See Myers' critique of "consensus" and "reality" in the work of Bruffee and Elbow.

[5] The titles of the two letters in College English differ only by a middle initial. The January 1986 letter is "Kenneth A. Bruffee Responds"; the October 1987 letter is "Kenneth Bruffee Responds."

[6] A similar basis underlies Ira Shor's success with community college students outlined in his Critical Teaching and Everyday Life, a book which is indispensable to a lucid teaching praxis. See also Gere.

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